



# National Water Quality Initiative

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**Auburn, AL**

# Helping People Help the Land

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- NRCS works in a partnership effort to deliver voluntary, incentives based locally led conservation on Private Land
- State and National Strategic Goal:
  - “Eliminate and reduce impairments to water bodies and help prevent the designation of additional water bodies to the “impaired” list.”

# Helping People Help the Land

- Soil
- Water
- Air
- Plants
- Animals
- Energy



United States Department of Agriculture



NRCS

Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service



1910-1911  
 1911-1912  
 1912-1913



July 26, 2012

# Gulf of Mexico Initiative

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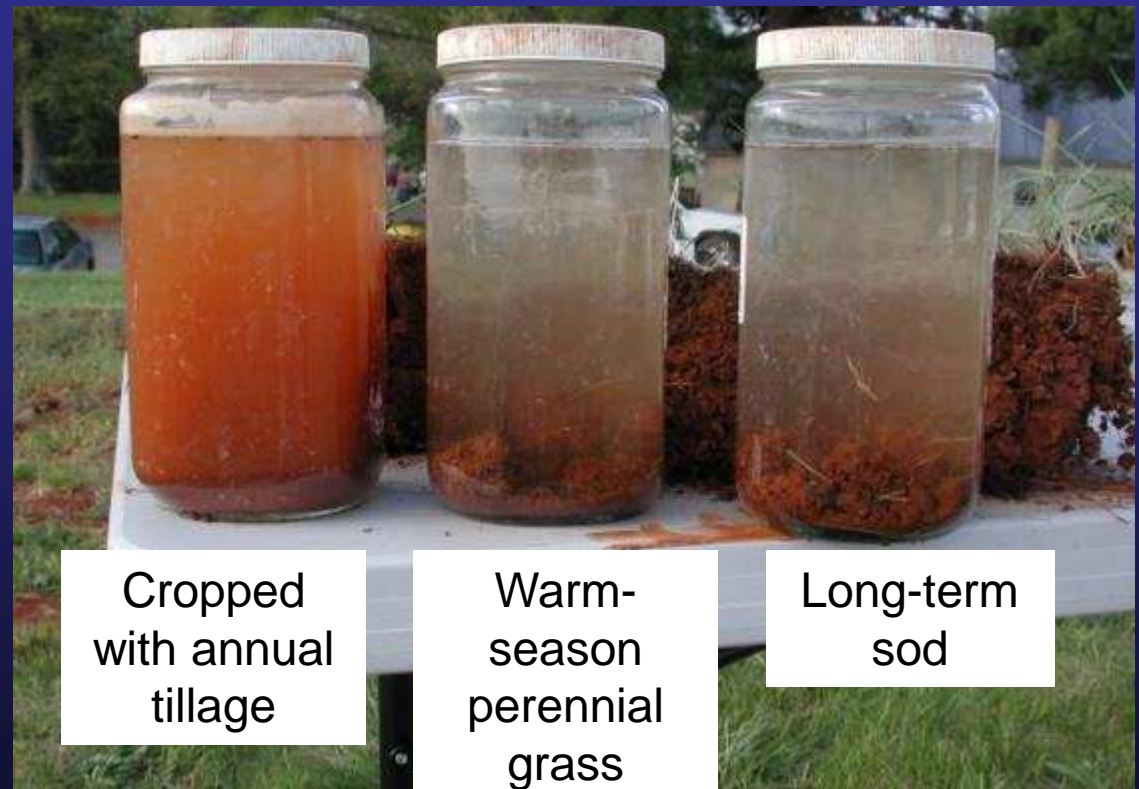
# Conservation Impacts

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- CEAP – Conservation Effects Assessment Program



# Soil Health $\Rightarrow$ Water Quality



# National Water Quality Initiative

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- Initiated by NRCS Chief White in FY 2012
- Funded through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Each State dedicated at least 5% of their EQIP allocation toward this focused effort



# National Water Quality Initiative

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## Program Goals:

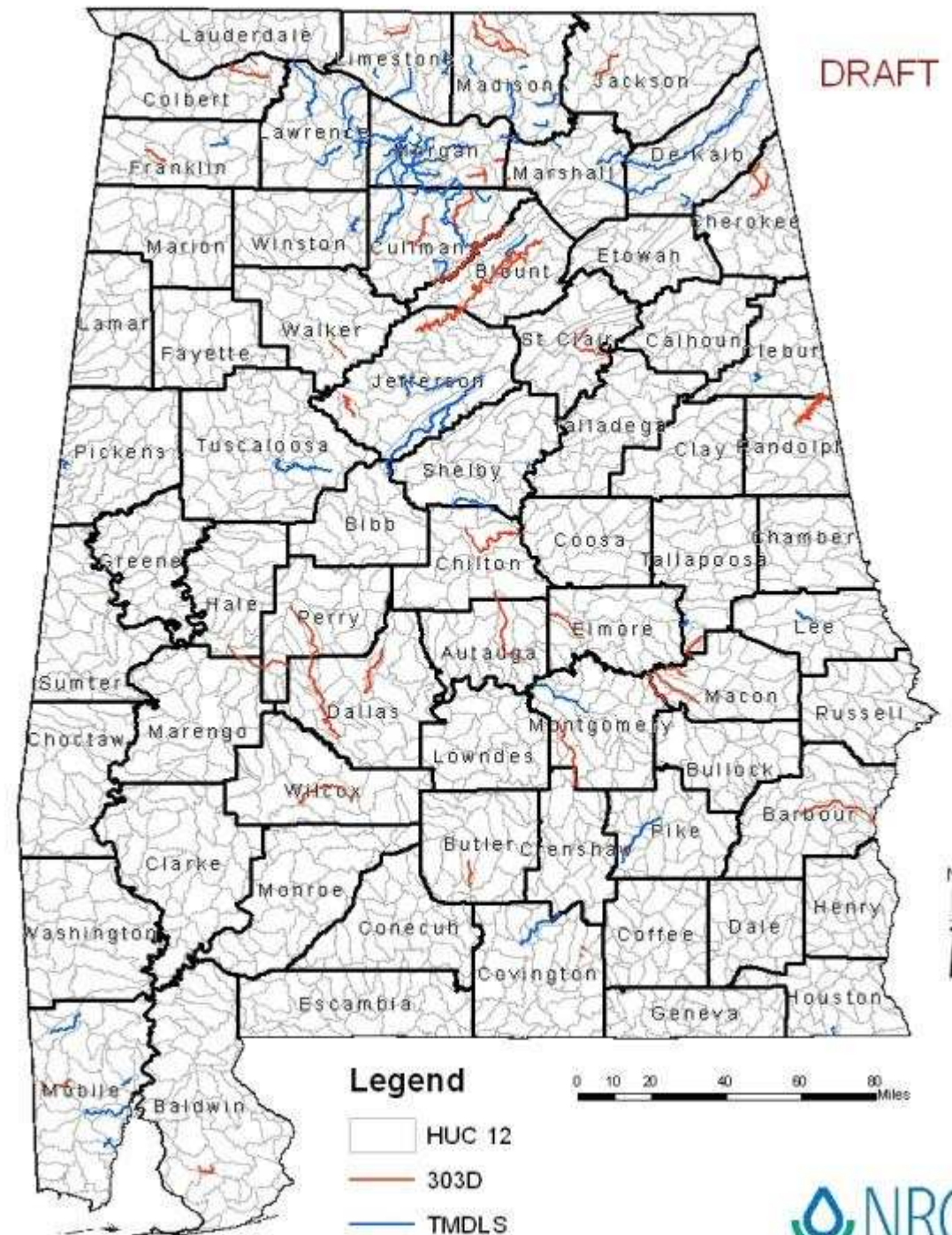
- Provide cleaner waterways and improve water quality
- Provide healthy habitat for fish and wildlife
- Reduce agricultural impacts on water quality

# Selecting Watersheds

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- *Impaired/Threatened waters*
- *Small watersheds* (12 digit HUC)
- Efforts can have a *significant impact* on reducing negative agricultural water quality impacts
- Focused effort should occur in a *5 year period or less*
- *Leveraging* partner efforts that address the same impairments
- Availability of *monitoring data* that can be used to demonstrate results

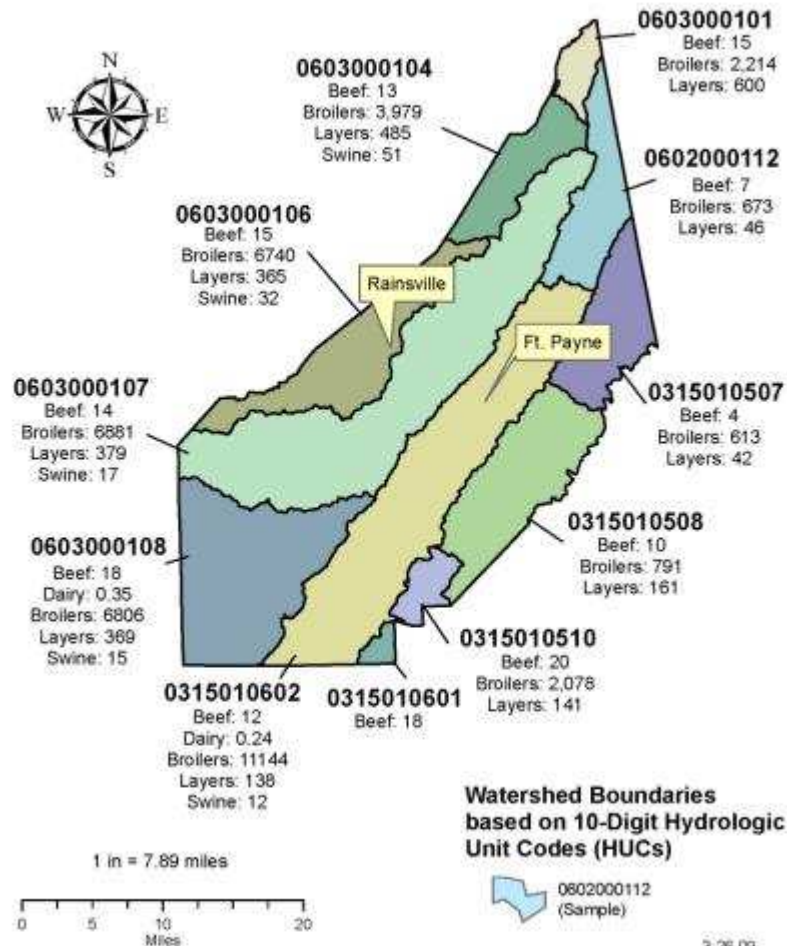
## 303D/TMDLS from Agricultural Sources



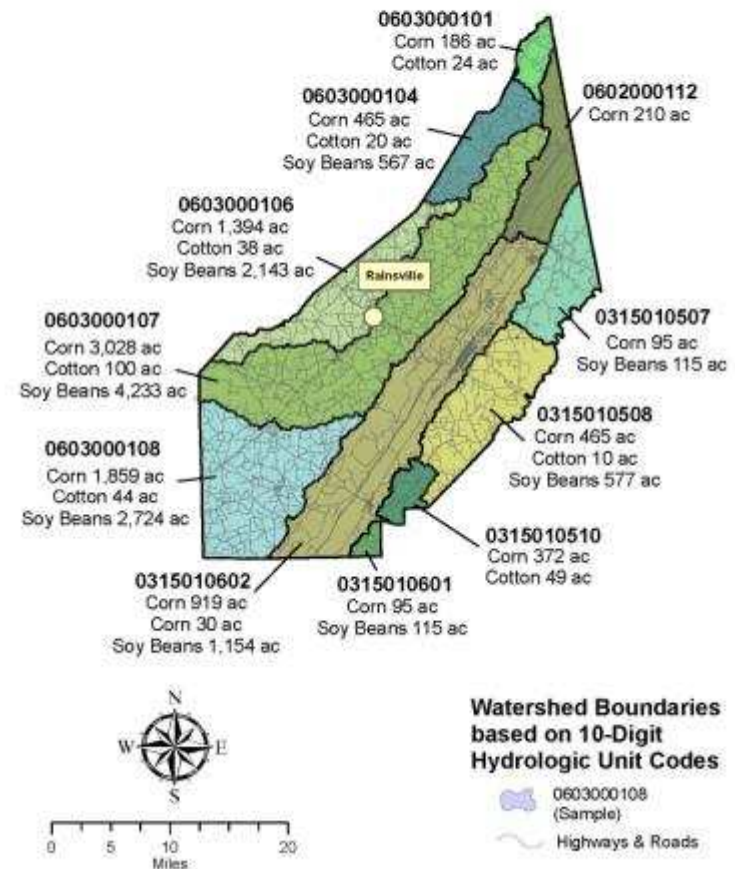


# 2007 SWCD Watershed Assessment

## DeKalb County, Alabama Farm Animals per 100 Watershed Acres



## DeKalb County, Alabama Principle Crops (2005)

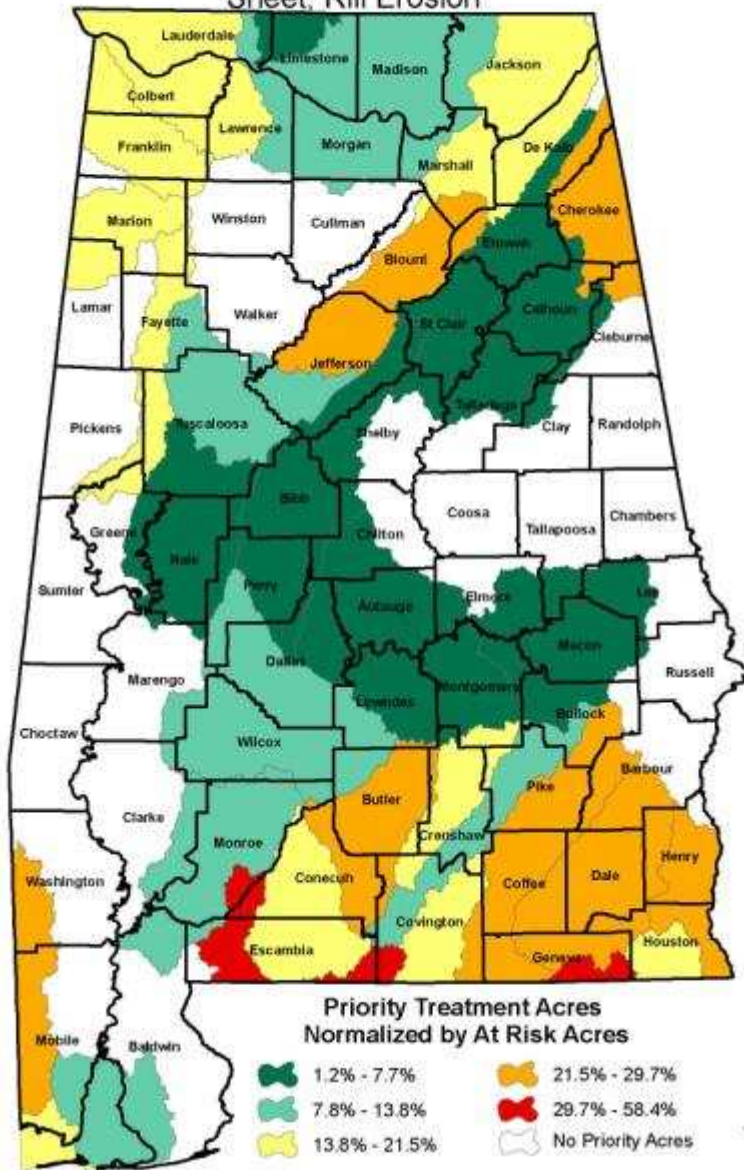


# NRCS State Resource Assessment

## State Resource Assessment

### Cropland Priority #1

#### Sheet, Rill Erosion

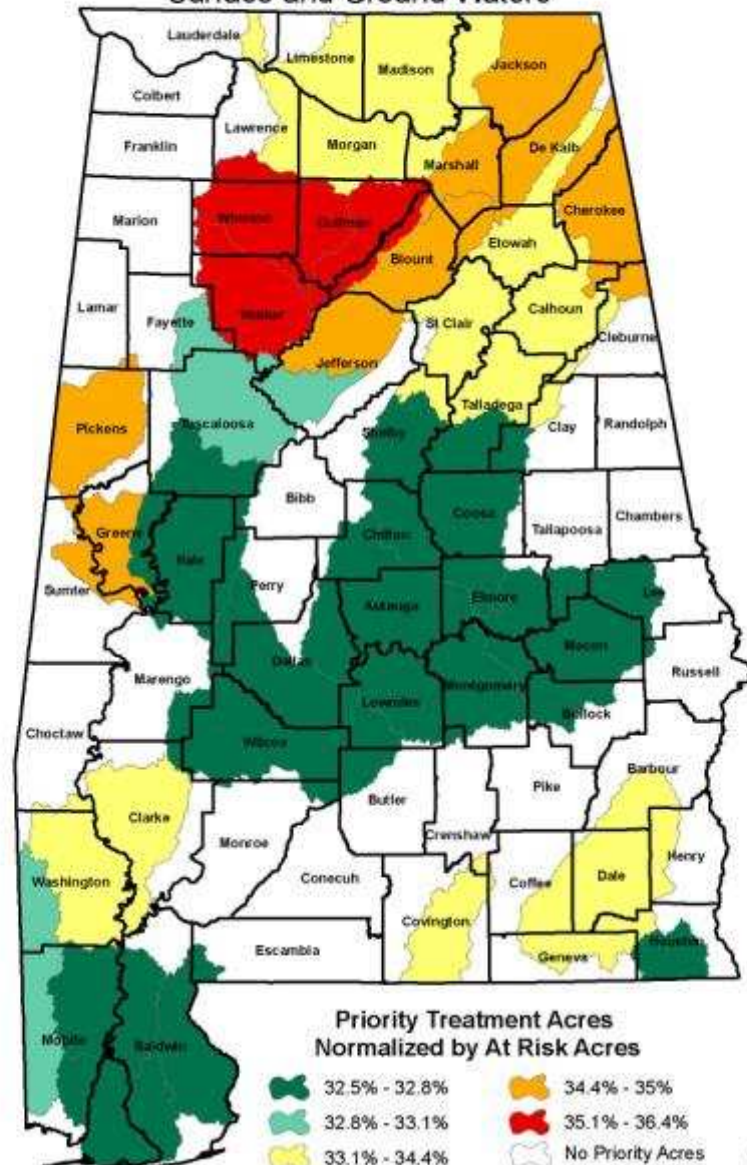


R  
July

## State Resource Assessment

### Other Associated Ag Land Priority #1

#### Water Quality Degradation - Excess Nutrients in Surface and Ground Waters



1:2,225,000

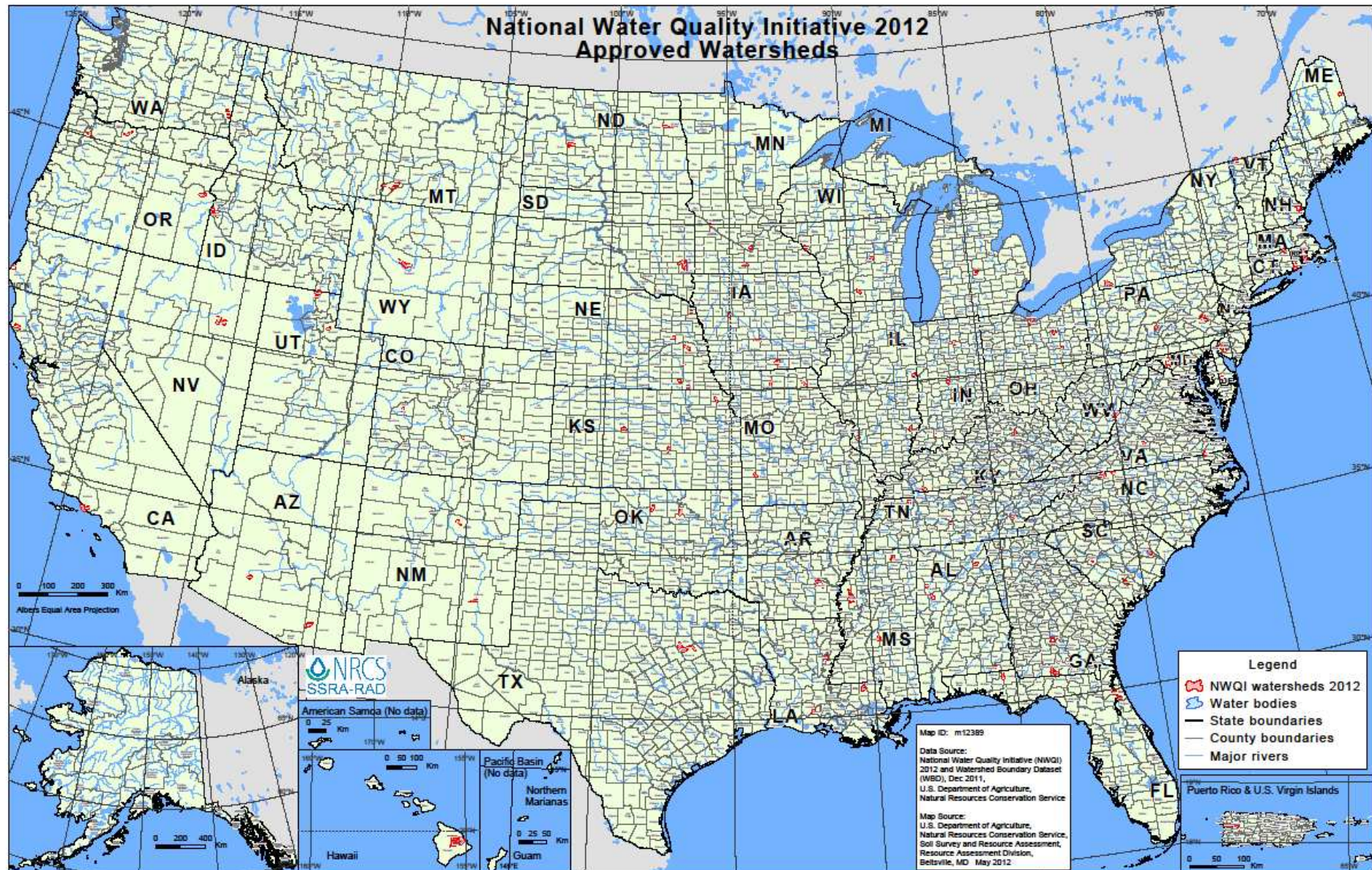
# Partner Input

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- NRCS identified priority watersheds through the help of local partnerships and state water quality agencies
  - The water quality subcommittee of the **State Technical Committee** provided input toward the selection of watersheds for FY 2012

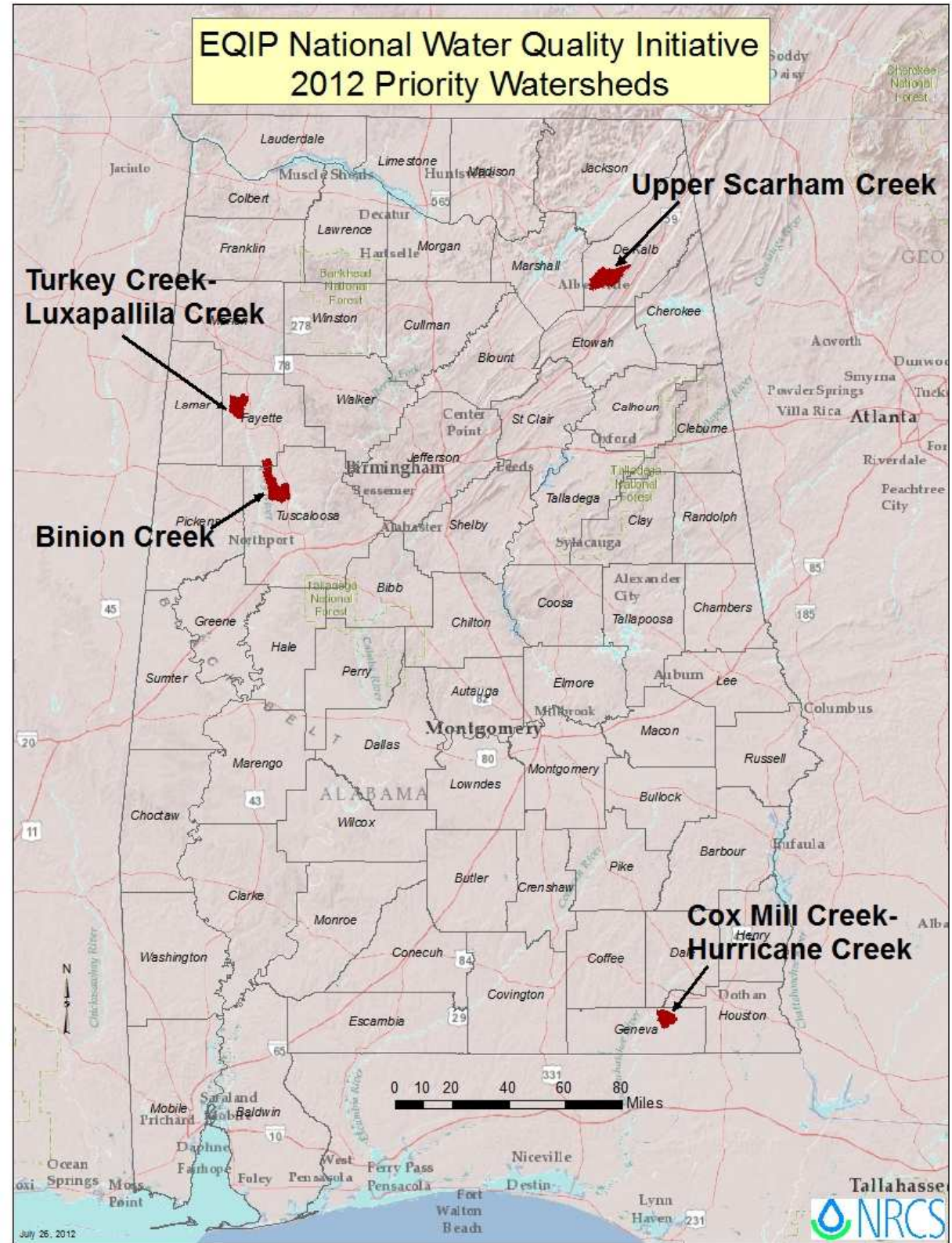


# Priority Watersheds





- **Guntersville Lake –  
Upper Scarham  
Creek**
- **Choctawhatchee –  
Cox Mill Creek and  
Hurricane Creek**
- **Upper Black Warrior  
– Binion Creek**
- **Turkey Creek –  
Luxapallila Creek  
Upper**



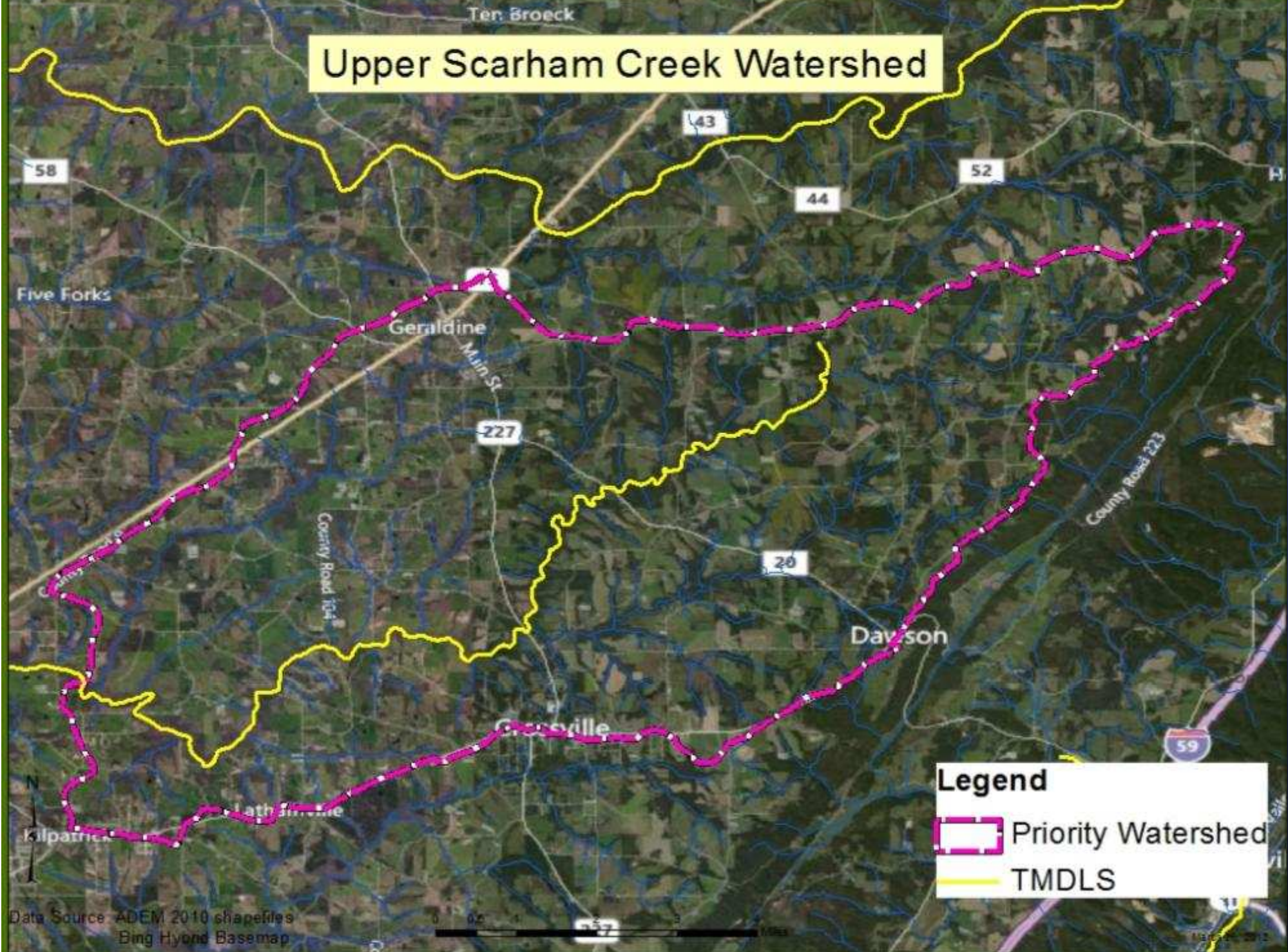
# Conservation Implementation

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- NRCS conservation professionals provide technical assistance to determine which conservation actions provide the best results to improve water quality
- Example conservation practices:
  - nutrient management
  - erosion control
  - conservation tillage
  - buffers



# Upper Scarham Creek Watershed



25,000 acres of agricultural land



# Guntersville Lake - Upper Scarham Creek

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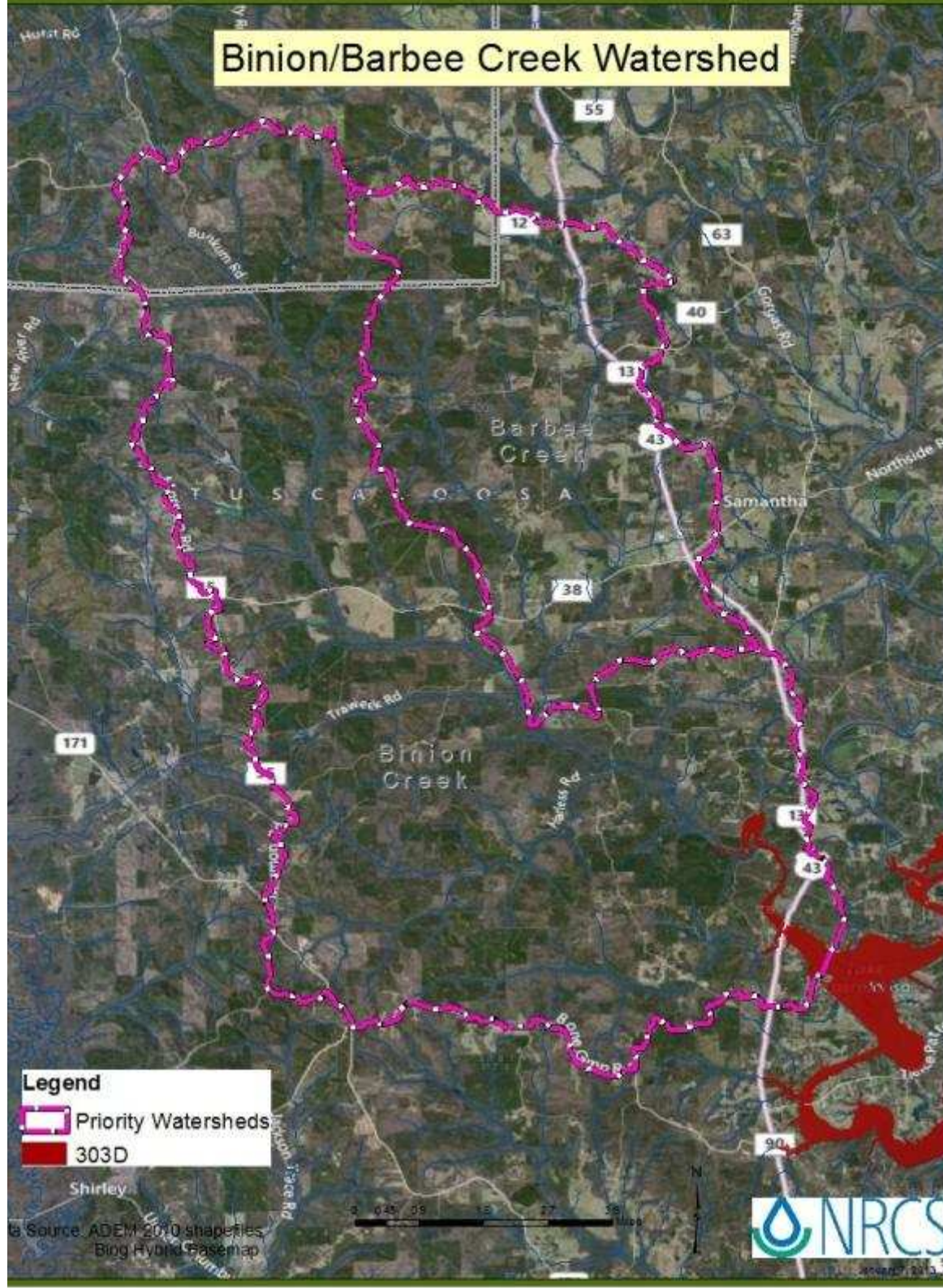


Exposed Litter Pile

Waste Storage  
Structure



## Binion/Barbee Creek Watershed

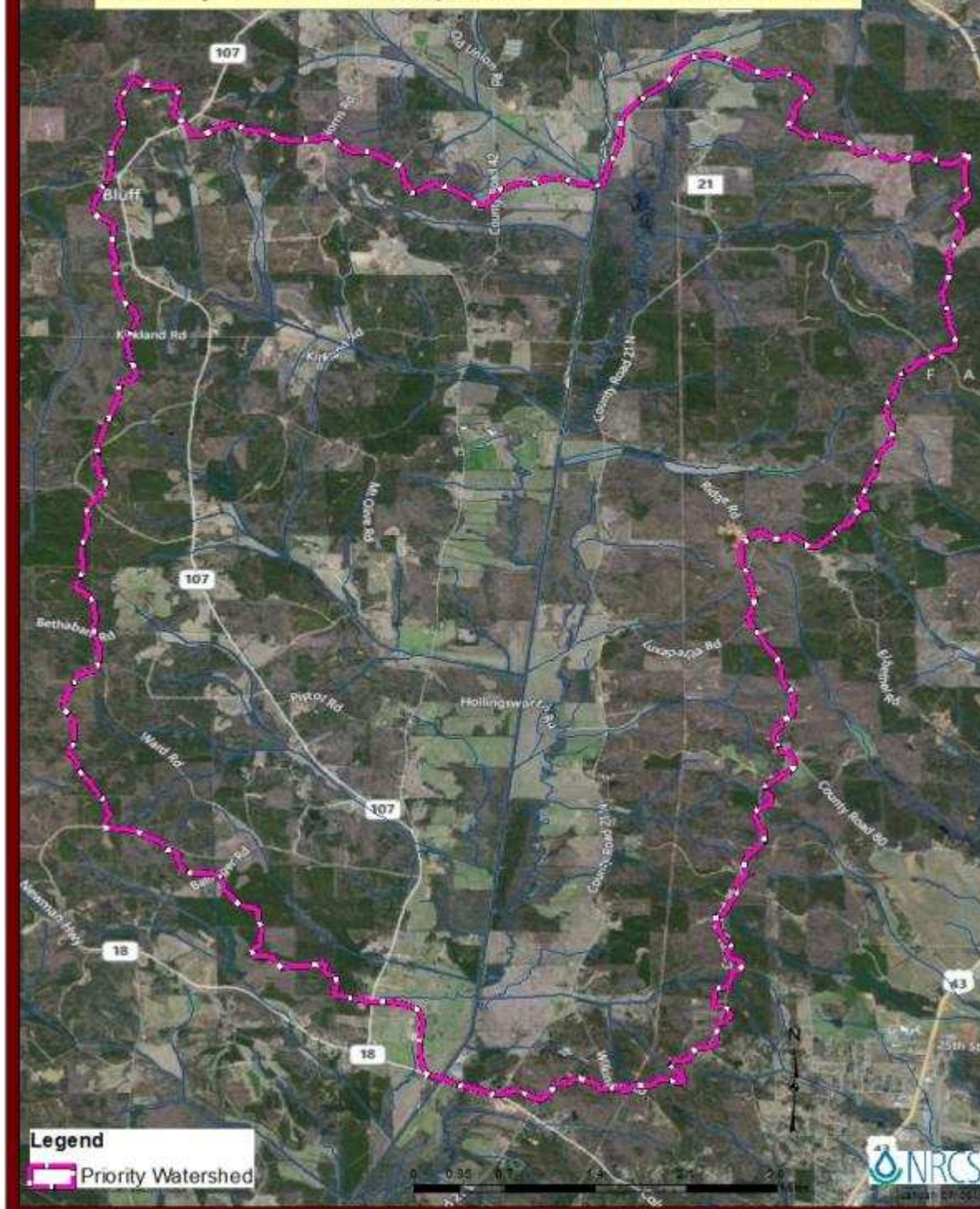


## Binion Creek

- Located in North River Watershed
- Strategic Habitat Unit
- 95% in timber or ag production
- Reduce sediment load
- Maintain consistent water temperatures for aquatic species



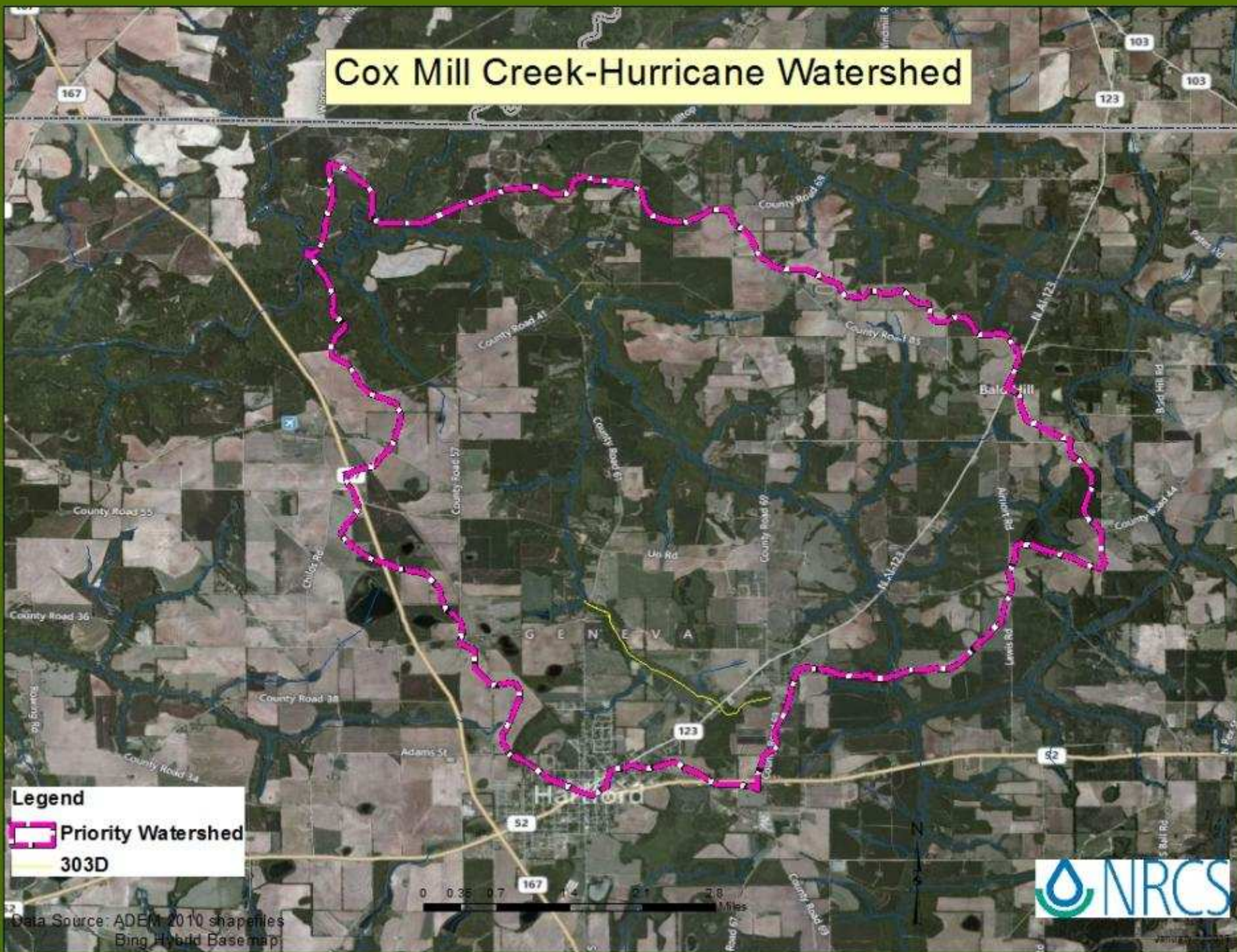
## Turkey Creek-Luxapallila Creek Watershed



- Located in Fayette County
- 7,000 acres of ag land
- Water supply for City of Fayette



## Cox Mill Creek-Hurricane Watershed



Geneva County 12,500 acres of agricultural land



# Upper Choctawhatchee – Cox Mill Creek and Hurricane Creek



Newly Planted  
Cover Crop

Mature Cover Crop





# 2012 Summary

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- 53,000 acres of agricultural land
- 9,061 acres under contract
- 51 conservation practices planned
  - Animal waste storage/treatment – 15
  - Soil health/erosion control – 23
  - Grazing management/access control - 13

# Future Water Quality Efforts

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- NRCS has asked the Alabama Clean Water Partnership (ACWP) to assist in compiling a list of the most important 12 digit watersheds for water quality and aquatic restoration projects.

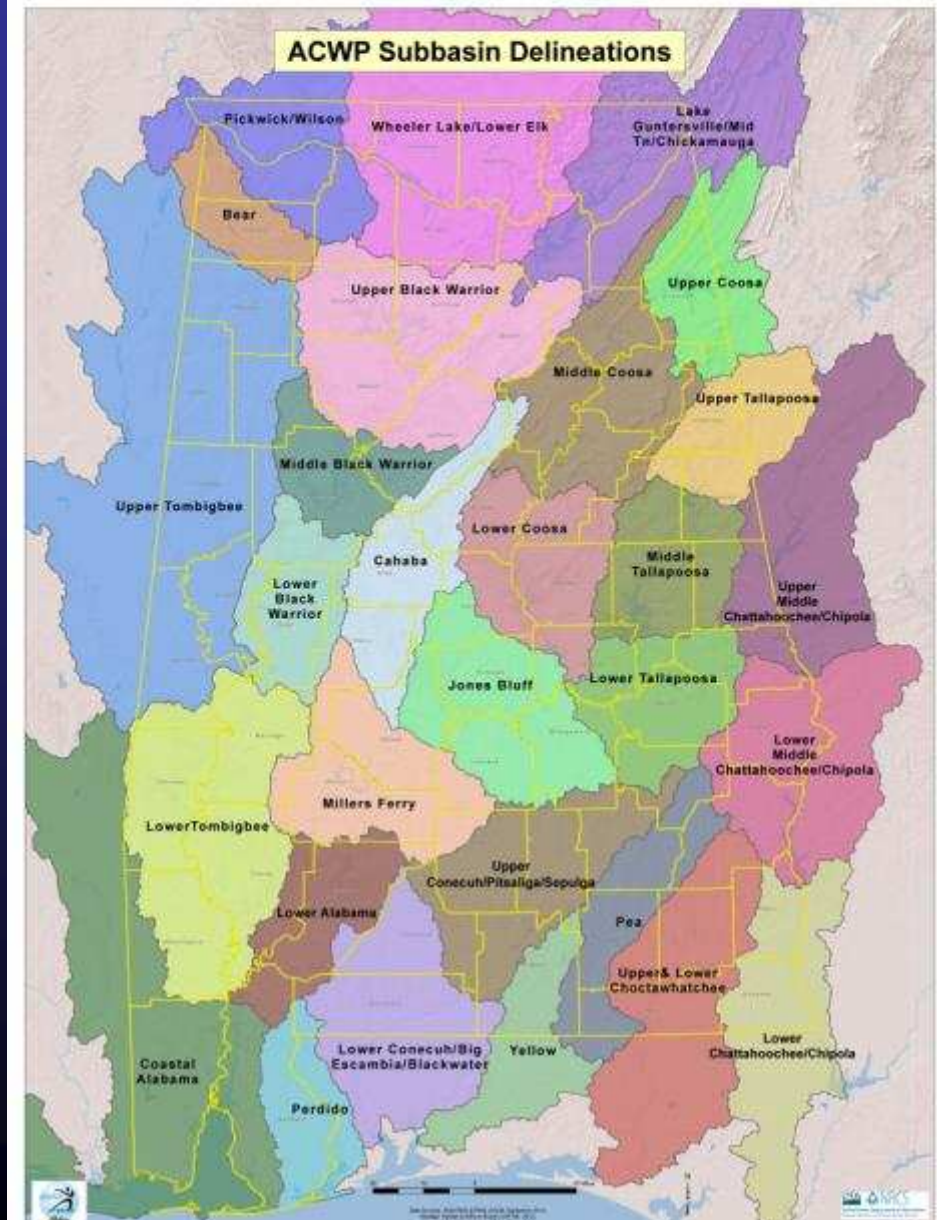


# Stream Prioritization Project

ACWP Basin and  
Statewide Priorities:

- Agriculture and Forestry Conservation
- Urban Conservation
- Aquatic Restoration

[www.cleanwaterpartnership.org](http://www.cleanwaterpartnership.org)





# Future Water Quality Efforts

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- Source Water Collaboration
  - National Video Conference with EPA in October 2012
    - Presented Source water Toolkit & website
  - Pilot Project with Alabama Rural Water Association and Rural Utilities for Source water protection

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http://www.sourcewatercollaborative.org/

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WHERE  
SAFE WATER  
BEGINS

Welcome to SourceWaterCollaborative.org, a web forum about where America's safe drinking water begins – the lakes, streams, rivers and aquifers we tap for public water systems. We are a web portal of the Source Water Collaborative, 23 national organizations united to protect America's sources of drinking water.

SOURCE WATER HIGHLIGHTS

View All Highlights



EPA Releases Progress Report on Potential Impacts of Hydraulic Fracturing on Drinking Water Resources

Posted on: January 14, 2013

In light of its national study to understand the potential effects of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water, the EPA released a progress report on the effort in December 2012. The report summarizes the status of 18 research projects that are part of the overall study and offers updates on chemicals used during fracturing. The study was initiated at the request of Congress in 2010 and looks at the full lifespan of water in the hydraulic fracturing process.

[Click here](#) to read EPA's hydraulic fracturing progress report in full.



Register Today: Free January 9th Webinar on Collaborating with USDA Programs



UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY  
27

2013 NACD Annual Meeting

FEBRUARY  
11

NRWA Rural Water Rally

MARCH  
11

ASDWA 2013 Member Meeting

MARCH  
17

AMWA Water Policy Conference

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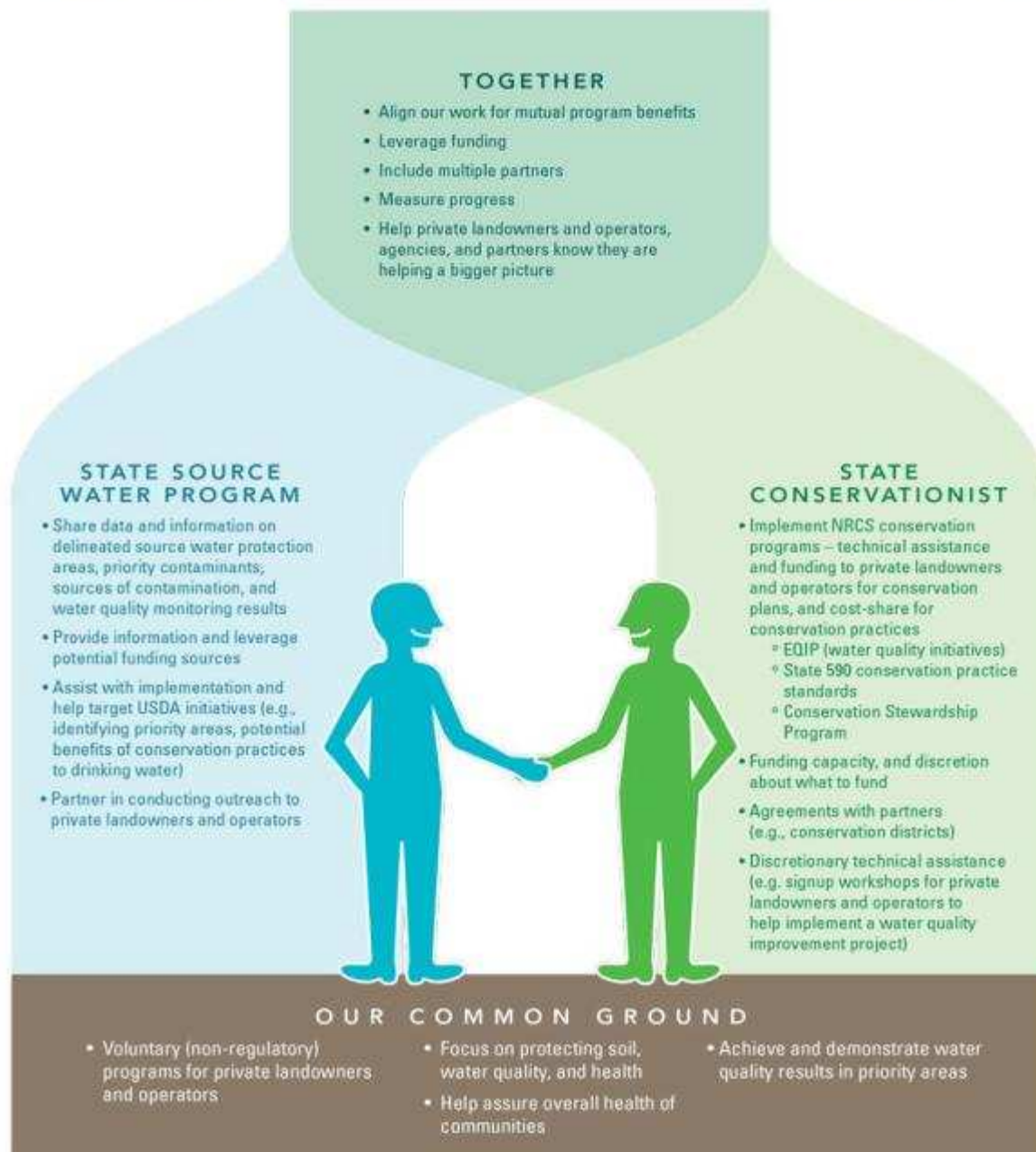


CREATE-YOUR-OWN GUIDE  
ONLINE TOOL

The Source Water Collaborative has developed a tool to help you create a customized guide to encourage local officials to connect with best practices, people, and other resources that can help them protect their sources of drinking water. The online tool is free & easy to create your own guide in just a few minutes.

DoneInternet100%

# COLLABORATION CAN PROTECT SOURCES OF DRINKING WATER



## Collaboration Toolkit: Protecting Drinking Water Sources through Agricultural Conservation Practices

<http://www.sourcewatercollaborative.org/swp-usda/>



# Water Quality Initiative

## Public Benefits

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- NRCS is proud to be involved in a nationwide effort with landowners and communities to improve and protect our water resources
- The landowners and farmers participating in the initiative will receive conservation payments to work on the land in a sustainable way which provides cleaner water
- In addition to the financial assistance, the land will remain productive into the future
- Communities benefit by having clean waterways, safer drinking water, and healthy habitat for fish and wildlife



*Thank you for your attention!*

**USDA-NRCS**

**Helping People Help the Land**

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